



**For immediate release**

**Lithuania urged to investigate its own involvement in CIA programme of rendition, secret detention and torture**

**London, UK, 13 September 2013** – REDRESS and the Human Rights Monitoring Institute (HRMI), today submitted a joint complaint to the Lithuanian Prosecutor General. The complaint calls for an investigation into allegations that Mustafa al-Hawsawi, who is currently facing trial by military commission at Guantánamo Bay, was illegally transferred to and secretly detained and tortured in Lithuania as part of a CIA-led programme.

REDRESS and HRMI submitted the complaint following an analysis of the publicly available evidence on the secretive United States programme, including information gathered by European and international bodies as well as flight data gathered by the NGOs Reprieve and Access Info Europe. The information indicated that Mr al-Hawsawi may have been secretly held in Lithuania for a period between March 2004 and September 2006 as part of United States counter-terrorism initiatives to elicit information from “high value detainees.”

The United States has made it impossible for Mr al-Hawsawi to present evidence himself. Any information from Mr al-Hawsawi (and his military lawyer) on these matters is automatically classified, accessible only to those with high-level security clearance. The secrecy that underpins the CIA programme has made it extraordinarily difficult for Mr al-Hawsawi to gain access to evidence related to his rendition in and out of Lithuania and to present it. Rendition cases involve disappearances in the context of secrecy. In these cases, knowledge of the events lie almost exclusively with the authorities involved.

Mr al-Hawsawi faces capital charges before a United States Military Commission in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. The charges relate to his alleged involvement as media organiser and financier in the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States. The charges are likely to be based on evidence obtained during his time in secret detention.

Carla Ferstman, Director of REDRESS, said: *“The restrictions imposed on Mr al-Hawsawi deprive him of a voice and bar him from communicating with the outside world. At the same time, he faces risk of the death penalty in a military trial that is potentially relying on evidence extracted under torture. Mr al-Hawsawi is left limited avenues to seek justice. Lithuania must act on the information provided in our detailed joint complaint; they and they alone can shed light on what happened”*.

In their complaint, REDRESS and HRMI urge the Lithuanian prosecutor to conduct an effective investigation into the suspected criminal offenses committed in Lithuania against Mr al-Hawsawi. The Lithuanian Prosecutor General is called upon to secure evidence, seek clarification from Mr al-Hawsawi (via the United States), seek urgent preservation and disclosure of all relevant evidence,

and identify all officials involved in the alleged violations with a view to ensuring they are prosecuted if, and as appropriate.

*“It has been established beyond doubt that the CIA programme, involving rendition, secret prisons, interrogations, enforced disappearances and alleged torture entailed systematic violations of human rights,”* said Mėta Adutavičiūtė, Legal and Policy Adviser at HRMI. *“But with the exception of Italy, neither Lithuania nor other complicit European countries – including the UK, Romania and Poland – have adequately investigated these serious allegations or provided a remedy to victims. This case presents Lithuania with an opportunity to uphold its human rights obligations, and to emphasise to other states their obligations to victims, including providing them with justice and the need for a public disclosure of the truth.”*

**For further information**, please contact: Eva Sanchis, REDRESS’ Communications Officer, on +44 (0) 20 7793 1777 or [eva@redress.org](mailto:eva@redress.org) or Mėta Adutavičiūtė, HRMI’s Legal and Policy Adviser, on +370 5 2314 676 or [meta.adutaviciute@hrmi.lt](mailto:meta.adutaviciute@hrmi.lt).

**About REDRESS:** REDRESS was founded by a torture survivor in 1992. Since then, it has consistently fought for the rights of torture survivors and their families in the UK and abroad. It has intervened in a range of leading torture cases. More information is available on: [www.redress.org](http://www.redress.org).

**About HRMI:** HRMI is a non-governmental organisation founded in 2003 in Lithuania with the purpose of promoting an open democratic society through implementation of human rights and freedoms. HRMI undertakes strategic litigation, drafts alternative reports to international human rights bodies, raises human rights awareness, and advocates for greater accountability of the government. More information can be found on: [www.hrmi.lt](http://www.hrmi.lt).